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## THE LAST YEARS OF SIR WALTER.

A FRESH impetus will be given to the study of the writings and the life of Sir Walter Scott by the recent publication of his private Journal. It has been issued and most admirably edited by Mr David Douglas, Edinburgh. The Journal covers the period from November 20, 1825, to April 16, 1832—the year of his death. The original consists of two small quarto volumes bound in vellum, and furnished with strong locks. The manuscript is closely written on both sides, and towards the end, remarks the editor, shows painful evidence of the physical prostration of the writer.

The beginning of the Journal towards the close of the year 1825 coincides singularly with the approach of the great financial calamity which wrecked Scott's fortune and darkened the remaining years of his life. His career up till that time had been of great brilliancy. There is nothing like it in the annals of literature. From early manhood he had worked with his pen. He had collected the Ballads of the Borders and published them, and done other literary work, before he gave to the world the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' in 1805. He was then thirty-four years of age—showing that his genius, like other strong and vigorous growths, was slow in maturing. The 'Lay' caught the ear of the world at once. Its splendid panorama of Border chivalry and Border romance opened up to the public a new source of intellectual pleasure. So decided was the success of the 'Lay' that Constable the publisher offered its author one thousand guineas for the next poem, 'Marmion,' without having seen a line of the manuscript. When, in 1808, the latter poem did appear—like the 'Lay,' in a magnificent quarto form, price a guinea and a half—two thousand copies were disposed of in less than a month. It would be interesting to know what poet of the present day could make such a venture with such success.

Other poems followed, and it was not until the passionate verse of Byron had taken possession

of the public taste that Scott felt his time was come to retire from this field of effort. The result, in 1814, was the novel of 'Waverley,' the first of a series of stories which are all but unequalled in prose fiction for the strength and versatility of creative power displayed by their author. Until 1825, Scott held the field in this department of literature. In that year also the great shadow of disaster began to draw around him. He, with his printers and publisher—the Ballantynes and Constable respectively—had for years carried on a system of doing business which was fraught with much danger to all concerned. The novels had been so successful that the individuals concerned in their production foresaw nothing but continued prosperity, and they heavily forestalled the profits. They were spending their money, in fact, before it was earned. Scott had purchased Abbotsford and other properties at high prices, and at the time when the failure occurred he had received ten thousand pounds (in bills) for three new novels, not a line of any of which was written. It is easy, of course, for us all to be wise after the event; but this clearly was a hazardous way of doing business. At length in January 1826, Hurst and Robinson, the London agents of Constable, collapsed, and with them went down not only Constable and the Ballantynes, but Scott himself—he being found, in the long run, personally responsible for the enormous debt of £130,000. This painful event overshadows the whole of the Journal which Scott shortly before had begun to keep, and gives to the most of it a tincture of sadness and melancholy.\*

The first note of trouble is sounded under date November 22, 1825. 'Here,' he says, 'is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city

\* As the readers of Lockhart's 'Life of Scott' are aware, that biographer has drawn largely from the entries in the Journal now printed in full, so that it is difficult in making quotations to avoid occasionally reproducing in part what appeared in Lockhart's pages fifty years ago.

[London] has affected H. & R., Constable's agents. Should they go, it is not likely that Constable can stand, and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J. B. [James Ballantyne] and myself. Thank God, I have enough at least to pay forty shillings in the pound, taking matters at the very worst, but much distress and inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good upon me, but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalising and moralising either. Necessity is like a sour-faced cookmaid, and I a turnspit whom she has flogged ere now. If "Woodstock" [which he was then writing] can be out by 25th January, it will do much, and it is possible. . . . Could not write to purpose for thick-coming fancies; the wheel would not turn easily, and cannot be forced.'

But the financial situation was found to be much worse than Scott had anticipated, and he joined in a bond for £5000 for the relief of Hurst and Robinson. This transaction, which he thought at the time would go far to end all difficulties, had a temporarily cheerful effect on his spirit, and on December 7 he writes: 'I have much to comfort me in the present aspect of my family. My eldest son, independent in fortune, united to an affectionate wife, and of good hopes in his profession; my second, with a good deal of talent and in the way, I trust, of cultivating it to good purpose; Anne, an honest, downright good Scots lass, in whom I would only wish to correct a spirit of satire; and Lockhart is Lockhart, to whom I can most willingly confide the happiness of the daughter who chose him and whom he has chosen. My dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes, is, I fear, frail in health—though I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this troublesome complaint goes on, it bodes no long existence. My brother was affected with the same weakness, which, before he was fifty, brought on mortal symptoms. The poor major had been rather a free liver. But my father, the most abstemious of men save when the duties of hospitality required him to be very moderately free with his bottle, and that was very seldom, had the same weakness which now annoys me, and he, I think, was not above seventy when cut off. Square the odds, and good-night, Sir Walter, about sixty. I care not, if I leave my name unstained and my family properly settled. *Sat est vivisse.*'

His prophecy was fulfilled; he was only sixty-one when he died. In the meantime the commercial crisis was maturing, and Scott soon found that he would have to borrow £10,000 upon his estate of Abbotsford, if, indeed, he might not have to yield up the estate altogether. Abbotsford was very dear to him. 'I was,' he writes on December 18, 'to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from those dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things! I must get them kind masters. There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog because it has been mine.—I must end this, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress.' Then he adds

pathetically: 'I feel my dogs' feet on my knees. I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere.—This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things are. Poor Will Laidlaw! poor Tom Purdie! this will be news to wring your heart, and many a poor fellow's besides, to whom my prosperity was daily bread.'

Further on, under the same date, and in the midst of conflicting thoughts, he says: 'An odd thought strikes me: When I die, will the Journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read as the transient pout of a man worth £60,000, with wonder that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of chivalry has hung up his scutcheon for some 20s. a week, and where one or two old friends will look grave and whisper to each other, "Poor gentleman," "A well-meaning man," "Nobody's enemy but his own," "Thought his parts could never wear out," "Family poorly left," "Pity he took that foolish title." Who can answer this question?'

The result of the crash was that Scott, as already stated, was left with a debt to pay of £130,000. At this time he was busy with 'Woodstock'—a novel which he wrote in three months, and for which he received £8228. He also in the course of the year 1826 finished his 'Life of Napoleon,' for which he received £12,000. Here was £20,000 within twelve months; and this, added to the profit arising from other works on sale, enabled him at the end of the year to clear off £40,000. Yet, with all this marvellous energy, and all its marvellous results, certain of his creditors were merciless in their prosecution of him, and he frequently went about in momentary terror of being apprehended and consigned to a debtor's prison. But the magnanimity of one other creditor—Sir William Forbes, the banker—finally averted this affront. Sir William paid the amount in question, some £2000, and ranked for it only as an ordinary creditor. Scott did not know of this act of generosity till some time after. Nor was all his trouble at an end even then, for in May of that year his wife, Lady Scott, died at Abbotsford.

But no calamity could abate Scott's zeal in the use of his pen for the resuscitation of his estate. In 1827, he published, besides numerous reviews, &c., the first series of 'The Chronicles of the Canongate,' and the 'Tales of a Grandfather,' in 1828, 'The Fair Maid of Perth,' and other works; in 1829, 'Anne of Geierstein,' a 'History of Scotland,' and the third series of 'Tales of a Grandfather,' in 1830, he issued many volumes on various subjects; in 1831, came 'Count Robert of Paris' and 'Castle Dangerous.' Along with all this mass of work, he found time to issue a collected edition of his novels, furnished with prefaces and notes by his own hand. Altogether, these were years of stupendous effort.

The Journal of this period is full of interest, both personal and literary. It gives us a great deal of insight into his methods of thinking and working; and with all the melancholy that pervades its entries, there is ever and anon a bright flash of humour lighting up the gloom, or a pat quotation or an apt story to turn away the sting

of some unpleasant thought. Many of his entries, too, bear upon other matters than his pecuniary difficulties. Thus, when in London in 1828, he writes: 'Dined by command with the Duchess of Kent. I was very kindly recognised by Prince Leopold. I was presented to the little Princess Victoria—I hope they will change her name—the heir-apparent to the Crown as things now stand. How strange that so large and fine a family as that of his late Majesty should have died off and decayed into old age with so few descendants! Prince George of Cumberland is, they say, a fine boy about nine years old—a bit of a pickle, swears and romps like a brat that has been bred in a barrack-yard. This little lady is educated with much care, and watched so closely by the Duchess and the principal governess that no busy maid has a moment to whisper—"You are heir of England." I suspect if we could dissect the little head we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter. She is fair, like the Royal Family, but does not look as if she would be pretty. The Duchess herself is very pleasing and affable in her manner.'

Being much admired abroad, Scott was constantly receiving presents of various kinds. One of these was amusing. He had done some service for a gentleman who had settled in New South Wales, and who consequently thought it proper to bring Scott home a couple of Emus. 'I wish,' says Scott, 'his gratitude had either taken a different turn, or remained as quiescent as that of others whom I have obliged more materially. I at first accepted the creatures, conceiving them, in my ignorance, to be some sort of blue and green parrot, which, though I do not admire their noise, might scream and yell at their pleasure if hung up in the hall among the armour. But your emu, it seems, stands six feet high in his stocking soles, and is little better than a kind of cassowary or ostrich. Hang them! they might eat up my collection of old arms for what I know. No! I'll no Emuses!'

During 1831, a very great change for the worse took place in Scott's health. His diligence at his desk, added to his usual official work, had been too much for the overworked brain, and the presence of paralysis began to make itself felt in his system. In the course of that year he found it necessary that he should go abroad in search of health, and the Government of the day, though opposed to Scott's party in politics, generously placed a frigate at his disposal. But a change for the better did not take place. When at Malta, Scott conceived a design for a new novel, and actually began it. But the power of continuous work was now fast leaving him, and his efforts at his desk became more and more intermittent, and latterly futile. When he at length reached Rome, paralysis had seized effectually upon his shattered frame, and the last entry in his Journal, dated April 16, 1832, is left unfinished:

'We entered Rome by a gate renovated by one of the old Pontiffs, but which I forget, and so paraded the streets by moonlight to discover, if possible, some appearance of the learned Sir William Gell or the pretty Miss Ashley. At length we found an old servant, who guided us to the lodging taken by Sir William Gell, where

all was comfortable, a good fire included, which our fatigue and the chilliness of the night required. We dispersed as soon as we had taken some food, wine, and water. We slept reasonably, but on the next morning'—

This is the last we have of Sir Walter. His cry was now for 'Home! home!' All the glories of Rome and Venice, Italy and the Rhine, which he had looked forward to with eagerness, were now but so many barriers between him and his own country—that 'land of brown heath and shaggy wood' which he loved so well. He arrived at the port of Leith in July, but was quite unconscious of all that passed around him, and so, in this state of mental oblivion, did he reach Abbotsford, only once waking up into brief consciousness when he saw the towers of his own home. On the 21st September the end came. On that day, says Lockhart, 'Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open—and so perfectly still, that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes.'

#### THE SURGEON OF GASTER FELL.

##### CHAPTER IV.—OF THE MAN WHO CAME IN THE NIGHT.

THE night set in gusty and tempestuous, and the moon was all girt with ragged clouds. The wind blew in melancholy gusts, sobbing and sighing over the moor, and setting all the gorse-bushes agroaning. From time to time a little sputter of rain pattered up against the window-pane. I sat until near midnight glancing over the fragment on immortality by Iamblichus, the Alexandrian platonist, of whom the Emperor Julian said that he was posterior to Plato in time, but not in genius. At last, shutting up my book, I opened my door and took a last look at the dreary fell and still more dreary sky. As I protruded my head, a swoop of wind caught me, and sent the red ashes of my pipe sparkling and dancing through the darkness. At the same moment the moon shone brilliantly out from between two clouds, and I saw, sitting on the hillside, not two hundred yards from my door, the man who called himself the surgeon of Gaster Fell. He was squatted among the heather, his elbows upon his knees, and his chin resting upon his hands, as motionless as a stone, with his gaze fixed steadily upon the door of my dwelling.

At the sight of this ill-omened sentinel, a chill of horror and of fear shot through me, for his gloomy and mysterious associations had cast a glamour round the man, and the hour and place were in keeping with his sinister presence. In a moment, however, a manly glow of resentment and self-confidence drove this petty emotion from my mind, and I strode fearlessly in his direction. He rose as I approached, and faced me, with the moon shining on his grave bearded face and glittering on his eyeballs. 'What is the meaning of this?' I cried as I came up on him. 'What right have you to play the spy on me?'

I could see the flush of anger rise on his face. 'Your stay in the country has made you forget



your manners,' he said. 'The moor is free to all.'

'You will say next that my house is free to all,' I said hotly. 'You have had the impertinence to ransack it in my absence this afternoon.'

He started, and his features showed the most intense excitement. 'I swear to you that I had no hand in it,' he cried. 'I have never set foot in your house in my life. Oh sir, sir, if you will but believe me, there is a danger hanging over you, and you would do well to be careful.'

'I have had enough of you,' I said. 'I saw the coward blow you struck when you thought no human eye rested upon you. I have been to your cottage, too, and know all that it has to tell. If there is law in England, you shall hang for what you have done. As to me, I am an old soldier, sir, and I am armed. I shall not fasten my door. But if you or any other villain attempt to cross my threshold, it shall be at your own risk.' With these words I swung round upon my heel and strode into my cabin. When I looked back at him from the door he was still looking at me, a gloomy figure among the heather, with his head sunk low upon his breast. I slept fitfully all that night; but I heard no more of this strange sentinel without, nor was he to be seen when I looked out in the morning.

For two days the wind freshened and increased with constant squalls of rain, until on the third night the most furious storm was raging which I can ever recollect in England. The thunder roared and rattled overhead, while the incessant lightning flashes illuminated the heavens. The wind blew intermittently, now sobbing away into a calm, and then, of a sudden, beating and howling at my window-pane until the glasses rattled in their frames. The air was charged with electricity, and its peculiar influence, combined with the strange episodes with which I had been recently connected, made me morbidly wakeful and acutely sensitive. I felt that it was useless to go to bed, nor could I concentrate my mind sufficiently to read a book. I turned my lamp half-down to moderate the glare, and leaning back in my chair, I gave myself up to reverie. I must have lost all perception of time, for I have no recollection how long I sat there on the borderland betwixt thought and slumber. At last, about three or, possibly, four o'clock, I came to myself with a start—not only came to myself, but with every sense and nerve upon the strain. Looking round my chamber in the dim light, I could not see anything to justify my sudden trepidation. The homely room, the rain-blurred window, and the rude wooden door were all as they had been. I had begun to persuade myself that some half-formed dream had sent that vague thrill through my nerves, when in a moment I became conscious of what it was. It was a sound, the sound of a human step outside my solitary cottage.

Amid the thunder and the rain and the wind, I could hear it—a dull stealthy footfall, now on the grass, now on the stones—occasionally stopping entirely, then resumed, and ever drawing nearer. I sat breathlessly, listening to the eerie sound. It had stopped now at my very door, and was replaced by a panting and gasping, as of one who has travelled fast and far. Only the thickness of the door separated me from this

hard-breathing, light-treading night-walker. I am no coward; but the wildness of the night, with the vague warning which I had had, and the proximity of this strange visitor, so unnerved me that my mouth was too dry for speech. I stretched out my hand, however, and grasped my sabre, with my eyes still bent upon the door. I prayed in my heart that the thing, whatever it might be, would but knock or threaten or hail me, or give any clue as to its character. Any known danger was better than this awful silence, broken only by the rhythmic panting.

By the flickering light of the expiring lamp I could see that the latch of my door was twitching, as though a gentle pressure were exerted on it from without. Slowly, slowly, it rose, until it was free of the catch, and then there was a pause of a quarter minute or more, while I still sat silent, with dilated eyes and drawn sabre. Then, very slowly, the door began to revolve upon its hinges, and the keen air of the night came whistling through the slit. Very cautiously it was pushed open, so that never a sound came from the rusty hinges. As the aperture enlarged, I became aware of a dark shadowy figure upon my threshold, and of a pale face that looked in at me. The features were human, but the eyes were not. They seemed to burn through the darkness with a greenish brilliancy of their own; and in their baleful shifty glare I was conscious of the very spirit of murder. Springing from my chair, I had raised my naked sword, when, with a wild shouting, a second figure dashed up to my door. At its approach my shadowy visitant uttered a shrill cry, and fled away across the fells, yelping like a beaten hound. The two creatures were swallowed up in the tempest from which they had emerged as if they were the very genii of the beating wind and the howling rain.

Tingling with my recent fear, I stood at my door, peering through the night with the discordant cry of the fugitives still ringing in my ears. At that moment a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the whole landscape and made it as clear as day. By its light, I saw, far away, upon the hillside, two dark figures pursuing each other with extreme rapidity across the fells. Even at that distance the contrast between them forbade all doubt as to their identity. The first was the small elderly man whom I had supposed to be dead; the second was my neighbour the surgeon. For an instant they stood out clear and hard in the unearthly light; in the next, the darkness had closed over them, and they were gone. As I turned to re-enter my chamber, my foot rattled against something on my threshold. Stooping, I found it was a straight knife, fashioned entirely of lead, and so soft and brittle that it was a strange choice for a weapon. To render it the more harmless, the top had been cut square off. The edge, however, had been assiduously sharpened against a stone, as was evident from the markings upon it, so that it was still a dangerous implement in the grasp of a determined man. It had evidently dropped from the fellow's hand at the moment when the sudden coming of the surgeon had driven him to flight. There could no longer be a doubt as to the object of his visit.

And what was the meaning of it all? you ask.

Many a drama which I have come across in my wandering life, some as strange and as striking as this one, has lacked the ultimate explanation which you demand. Fate is a grand weaver of tales; but she ends them, as a rule, in defiance of all artistic laws, and with an unbecoming want of regard for literary propriety. As it happens, however, I have a letter before me as I write which I may add without comment, and which will clear all that may remain dark.

KIRKBY LUNATIC ASYLUM,  
Sept. 4, 1885.

SIR—I am deeply conscious that some apology and explanation is due to you for the very startling and, in your eyes, mysterious events which have recently occurred, and which have so seriously interfered with the retired existence which you desire to lead. I should have called upon you on the morning after the recapture of my father; but my knowledge of your dislike to visitors, and also of—you will excuse my saying it—your very violent temper, led me to think that it was better to communicate with you by letter. On the occasion of our last interview I should have told you what I tell you now; but your allusions to some crime of which you considered me guilty, and your abrupt departure, prevented me from saying much that was on my lips.

My poor father was a hard-working general practitioner in Birmingham, where his name is still remembered and respected. About ten years ago he began to show signs of mental aberration, which we were inclined to put down to overwork and the effects of a sunstroke. Feeling my own incompetence to pronounce upon a case of such importance, I at once sought the highest advice in Birmingham and London. Among others we consulted the eminent alienist, Mr Fraser Brown, who pronounced my father's case to be intermittent in its nature, but dangerous during the paroxysms. 'It may take a homicidal, or it may take a religious turn,' he said; 'or it may prove to be a mixture of both. For months he may be as well as you or me, and then in a moment he may break out. You will incur a great responsibility if you leave him without supervision.'

The result showed the justice of the specialist's diagnosis. My poor father's disease rapidly assumed both a religious and homicidal turn, the attacks coming on without warning after months of sanity. It would weary you were I to describe the terrible experiences which his family have undergone. Suffice it that, by the blessing of God, we have succeeded in keeping his poor crazed fingers clear of blood. My sister Eva I sent to Brussels, and I devoted myself entirely to his case. He has an intense dread of madhouses; and in his sane intervals would beg and pray so piteously not to be condemned to one, that I could never find the heart to resist him. At last, however, his attacks became so acute and dangerous, that I determined, for the sake of those about me, to remove him from the town to the loneliest neighbourhood that I could find. This proved to be Gaster Fell; and there, he and I set up house together.

I had a sufficient competence to keep me, and being devoted to chemistry, I was able to pass

the time with a fair degree of comfort and profit. He, poor fellow, was as submissive as a child, when in his right mind; and a better, kinder companion no man could wish for. We constructed together a wooden compartment, into which he could retire when the fit was upon him; and I had arranged the window and door so that I could confine him to the house if I thought an attack was impending. Looking back, I can safely say that no possible precaution was neglected; even the necessary table utensils were leaden and pointless, to prevent his doing mischief with them in his frenzy.

For months after our change of quarters he appeared to improve. Whether it was the bracing air, or the absence of any incentive to violence, he never showed during that time any signs of his terrible disorder. Your arrival first upset his mental equilibrium. The very sight of you in the distance awoke all those morbid impulses which had been sleeping. That very evening he approached me stealthily with a stone in his hand, and would have slain me, had I not, as the least of two evils, struck him to the ground and thrust him into his cage before he had time to regain his senses. This sudden relapse naturally plunged me into the deepest sorrow. For two days I did all that lay in my power to soothe him. On the third he appeared to be calmer; but alas, it was but the cunning of the madman. He had contrived to loosen two bars of his cage; and when thrown off my guard by his apparent improvement—I was engrossed in my chemistry—he suddenly sprang out at me knife in hand. In the scuffle, he cut me across the forearm, and escaped from the hut before I recovered myself, nor could I find out which direction he had taken. My wound was a trifle, and for several days I wandered over the fells, beating through every clump of bushes in my fruitless search. I was convinced that he would make an attempt on your life, a conviction that was strengthened when I heard that some one in your absence had entered your cottage. I therefore kept a watch over you at night. A dead sheep which I found upon the moor terribly mangled showed me that he was not without food, and that the homicidal impulse was still strong in him. At last, as I had expected, he made his attempt upon you, which, but for my intervention, would have ended in the death of one or other of you. He ran, and struggled like a wild animal; but I was as desperate as he, and succeeded in bringing him down and conveying him to the cottage. Convinced by this failure that all hope of permanent improvement is gone, I brought him next morning to this establishment, and he is now, I am glad to say, returning to his senses.—Allow me once more, sir, to express my sorrow that you should have been subjected to this ordeal, and believe me to be faithfully yours,

JOHN LIGHT CAMERON.

P.S.—My sister Eva bids me send you her kind regards. She has told me how you were thrown together at Kirkby-Malhouse, and also that you met one night upon the fells. You will understand from what I have already told you that when my dear sister came back from Brussels I did not dare to bring her home, but preferred that she should lodge in safety in the

village. Even then I did not venture to bring her into the presence of her father, and it was only at night, when he was asleep, that we could plan a meeting.

And this was the story of this strange group, whose path through life had crossed my own. From that last terrible night I have neither seen nor heard of any of them, save for this one letter which I have transcribed. Still I dwell on Gaster Fell, and still my mind is buried in the secrets of the past. But when I wander forth upon the moor, and when I see the little gray deserted cottage among the rocks, my mind is still turned to the strange drama, and to the singular couple who broke in upon my solitude.

### THE PETROLEUM TRADE :

#### ITS DEVELOPMENTS AND ITS DANGERS.

THERE is no department of British mercantile industry which has developed with such marvellous rapidity as the Petroleum Trade. Since its beginning in 1859, when the total importations were about 2,000,000 gallons, it has increased by leaps and bounds until, in 1889, the amount brought into the United Kingdom reached the total of 102,647,478 gallons.

The existence of native petroleum, naphtha, or rock-oil, as it has been indiscriminately denominated, has been known to the inhabitants of Persia and Japan from time immemorial. It is to the Persian language that we must go for the derivation of the term naphtha, the root *nafata* meaning to exude; and the oil was so called on account of its exuding from the soil. The native naphtha of Persia and Japan would seem to have furnished the natives with a lamp-illuminant from the very earliest ages. Its first authentic use in Europe would, however, seem to date back no farther than the later part of last century, when a limited supply of 'lamp-oil,' obtained from a district in Calabria, was utilised by the Italian peasantry to light their dwellings. It is an interesting fact that the first use to which petroleum was put in this country was not that of a luminant. Its chemical composition rendered it a most useful medium for preserving substances which have a strong affinity for oxygen. Chemists employed it in preserving potassium and metals possessed of kindred qualities. Hot naphtha, it was discovered, dissolved phosphorus and sulphur, and deposited them on cooling. It was found to be, too, an excellent solvent for gutta-percha, caoutchouc, camphor, fatty and resinous bodies generally, and hence it was extensively used in the arts for these purposes. Its great use, however, is as a source of artificial light, and notwithstanding the present use of coal-gas and electric lighting, the employment of petroleum for this purpose still increases.

A perusal of the sources from which our supplies are obtained shows that the increase obtained from the Russian oil-wells in the neighbourhood of the Caspian is enormous. In 1883 the Muscovites supplied us with 500 barrels. Last year the imports from the same quarter amounted

to 771,000 barrels. During the same six years the supply from the United States had but increased from 1,329,000 to 1,355,000 barrels. That in the short space of six years Russian shipments should increase from practically nothing to more than half of those from America is most remarkable. Such phenomenal developments as these naturally call into existence the provision of means for adequate transit and storing of such enormous quantities.

At first, petroleum was brought into this country in barrels or boxes carried in the holds of wooden sailing-vessels. As far back as 1872, ships were built at Jarrow for the purpose of carrying petroleum in bulk; but these vessels were never employed in the trade. Prior to 1886, some ordinary cargo-vessels underwent costly alterations to convert them into petroleum-carriers; but they were only partially successful. The later petroleum steamers are spar-decked, and range from 250 to 300 feet in length, and from 1500 to 2500 tons gross register. They have their machinery aft, oil-holds up to the maindeck, and a long trunk from ten to fifteen feet wide from the main to the spar deck. The latter acts as a feeder, and allows the oil to expand and contract without dangerously affecting the vessel's stability. To have the holds half full with the oil free to wash about, reduces the ship's righting moment, and consequently the utmost care has to be taken in loading and discharging. Water ballast-tanks are commonly fitted, and a peculiar saddle-shaped tank, patented by Mr C. S. Swan, has been found specially useful. The oil-hold is divided into compartments by a centre line bulkhead, and by transverse bulkheads about twenty feet apart, and the ordinary structural details are modified in many respects, on account of the difficulties attendant upon making the work oil-tight. These vessels are all supplied with powerful pumps, and have large oil and water mains led along the maindeck, with branches into the holds, and connections to meet pipes from the shore. The oil is pumped into large reservoirs at the port of discharge.

A cargo may consist of several qualities of oil, and these are separated from each other by narrow water-spaces. Some two years ago, a sailing-vessel was built by the Barrow Shipbuilding Company to the order of an Antwerp firm. She was designed to carry petroleum in bulk in competition with the steamers. The success attendant upon this new departure may lead to the more extensive construction of vessels of a similar nature. Petroleum vessels cannot be used for any other purpose on account of their peculiar arrangement and smell. A proposal to carry palm-oil in a similar manner has been found impracticable on account of the corrosive ingredients which attack the steel, instead of preserving it, as petroleum does. Apropos of this new departure in British shipbuilding, it is stated that the Persians as far back as 1760 were known to carry petroleum in bulk in their own vessels on the Caspian. Petroleum-carriers are generally fitted with the electric light, so as to ensure a minimum of risk from fire. With every precaution that modern science can suggest, the carriage of this oil is beset with much difficulty and danger.

The specific gravity of petroleum varies from



75 to 8, and it is so susceptible to change of temperature that an increase of forty degrees Fahrenheit increases its bulk two per cent. The vapour given off is very inflammable, and it is this that constitutes the chief danger of petroleum-carrying. So long as the tanks are filled with the crude petroleum and securely closed, there is practically no danger, for there is no available space where the gas can accumulate. But where the tanks are not filled, or where the vapour from the oil is allowed to escape into the hold-spaces, and is not removed by adequate ventilation, a spark or light may cause the most disastrous consequences. Dr Dupré, Professor of Chemistry to the Westminster Medical School, and chemical adviser to the Explosives Department of the Home Office, describes the crude oil as a light-brown turbid liquid, showing a strong green fluorescence, with a specific gravity at the temperature of sixty degrees Fahrenheit of 0.795. When submitted to fractional distillation, the following results were obtained :

	Degrees Fahr.
Begins to boil at about.....	120
5 per cent. distilled over at about.....	270
10 per cent. distilled over at about.....	300
15 per cent. distilled over at about.....	325
20 per cent. distilled over at about.....	350

Other samples have shown a still more volatile character, evaporating at a temperature considerably lower than that stated above.

One volume of this oil is credited with the power of rendering inflammable or feebly explosive two thousand four hundred volumes of air. This mixture of petroleum-vapour and air can be set fire to by an electric spark, by a flame, or by any solid at a bright red-heat. As showing the necessity of thorough ventilation where the tanks are not filled and the man-holes perfectly secured, it may be stated that one gallon of oil will render inflammable no less than four hundred cubic feet of air.

The fatal explosion which occurred at Rouen on board the petroleum-carrier *Fergusons* shows in a most marked degree the fearful risks attendant upon the carriage of the crude oil in vessels not scientifically adapted for the purpose. The *Fergusons* in 1885 underwent structural alterations to transform her from an ordinary cargo-steamer into a petroleum-carrier. She was fitted with thirty-two tanks for holding oil, and in addition she had four regulating tanks. Unfortunately, however, there was between these tanks considerable spaces, and these formed a large reservoir, in which the vapour that escaped from the tanks accumulated. To minimise the risk of explosion, the vessel was fitted with electric light. But the faulty character of her electric apparatus no doubt led to the terrible explosion which destroyed the ship. To enable the tankmen to pursue their duties in the hold of the *Fergusons*, portable electric lamps were provided. The wires, however, conducting the electricity from the main cable to these lamps were not properly 'switched on,' and when contact was made or broken, a spark was caused quite sufficient, as the sequel showed, to ignite the inflammable mixture that had accumulated in the hold.

While the vessel was discharging at Rouen, no fires were allowed on board, even the steam for the pumping-engines being supplied from the

shore. In spite of these precautionary measures, however, a terrible explosion occurred when the vessel was half discharged : the mainmast was blown out of the vessel, and the after-part of the ship took fire. Shortly afterwards, another and still more terrific explosion followed, and the *Fergusons* became a total wreck. One man was never found after the explosion.

Such a disaster as this, melancholy as it no doubt is, has served to inculcate with very marked emphasis two truths to those interested in what may be termed the science of petroleum-carrying. These are, first, that vessels which admit of the accumulating of petroleum vapour in their holds are unsuitable for the trade; and secondly, that the electric installation and equipment should be of the most perfect and scientific character possible.

But this is not the only danger accruing from the carriage of petroleum. In the annals of every department of industrial science finality is not attained without much bitter experience, and the subject under discussion is no exception to this rule.

Practical occurrence has demonstrated that petroleum-conveyance is fraught with other dangers than those alluded to above. It will be readily seen that the residue of crude oil which remains in the tanks of a petroleum-carrier after the major portion has been pumped into the shore reservoirs, will, as a marketable commodity, be practically worthless. Consequently, the custom obtains of discharging it into the sea by means of the pumps. The steamer *Wild Flower*, specially constructed for the petroleum trade in 1889, was capable of carrying in bulk oil to the weight of two thousand five hundred and twelve tons. This amount she shipped at Philadelphia, and discharged at Rouen. After discharging, it would seem that oil to the depth of a few inches was left in the tanks. Some of them were then pumped full of water, to ballast the ship.

She then proceeded to the Wear, where she came to anchor. Here the water was pumped out. The residual oil, by virtue of its lesser specific gravity, would naturally be the last liquid ejected by the pumps. It was observed that when the pumping was nearly completed, the liquor ejected from the pipes was of a brown colour, and floated in the form of an oily film upon the surface of the sea. This thin film was carried by the incoming tide up the river, and the adjacent river was surrounded by it. Soon a small body of smoke and flame was observed upon the water. This rapidly increased in area and intensity until the neighbouring ships were enveloped by it. So intense was the heat of the flame, that one ship had some twenty-seven of her plates so badly buckled that they had to be removed, while another had her mast, bulwarks, and paddle-box consumed. The combustion lasted for an hour and a quarter, and then became extinct, partly from inanition, and partly from the effect of the water played upon it by the various engines employed to subdue it. One man, in endeavouring to escape from one of the flame-encircled vessels to the quay, lost his life, the water where he sank being described by an eye-witness as being literally on fire. It is surmised that a red-hot rivet was dropped over-

board from a neighbouring vessel that was undergoing repairs, and this sufficed to ignite the oily film that covered the surface of the water.

Dr Dupré, the authority alluded to above, has placed on record his opinion that a gallon of oil would in a very short time cover an area rather in excess of two square yards to the thickness of one-tenth of an inch. Such a film would admit of the easiest possible ignition. After the lapse of a few minutes, the oleaginous film would have become much more attenuated, and would consequently be much more difficult to set on fire. It is just possible, however, that the thicker film, being fired first, would rapidly communicate the flames to the thinner portion, or that the oily coating might have above it concentrated petroleum-vapour, which, once ignited, would form a ready medium for the transmission of the flame to the oil itself.

It is manifest that the practice of discharging tanks which have contained crude petroleum into crowded water-ways is a highly dangerous one, and is fraught with the gravest risks. A perusal of the bylaws of the river Wear Commissioners now in force, relative to the discharge of this oil, under the Petroleum Act of 1871, reveals the fact that the present development of the petroleum trade was not anticipated. The laws deal with the 'barrels or other vessels containing the petroleum . . . being taken from the lighters at the landing-place,' so that it is more than probable that the recent disaster will lead to improved legislation on the subject. *Experientia docet* is no doubt a very true adage, but the lessons instilled under its auspices are frequently of the most costly character. It is, therefore, the interest of all other ports to protect themselves from the possibility of a disaster kindred to that which occurred on the Wear. The important issues dependent upon the petroleum and its attendant industries cannot be over-estimated, and statistics tend to show that in the immediate future its already phenomenal development will be still further extended.

## THE LAST KING OF YEWLE.

### CHAPTER IX.—THE WHITE WILL.

WHEN Richard King turned on hearing the study door opened, he was riveted to the floor by the eye of the man that stood before him. He seemed to read some terrible fate in that intent and burning eye. Neither spoke, until the workman, perceiving himself in the wrong place, stood up and left the room.

Richard King's eyes followed the man, noticed him hesitate outside the door before closing it, and then he knew there was some other person there.

'Who is at the door?' he asked, with an effort that cost him much.

'Two officers with a warrant,' answered the vicar, without once removing those burning eyes of his.

'What do you mean?' he now demanded furiously, with a menacing step forward.

'That your hour has come, Richard King, when you must expiate to the uttermost farthing

the terrible wrong you have done to me.' The vicar spoke in a voice of suppressed passion. 'We now know who it was that forged the cheque and delivered it at the bank, with the awful consequence that I, a consecrated priest of God, was torn from the altar, and branded with the curse and infamy of a felon. But now your hour has come.'

'I believe you are mad,' answered King; and, assuming an appearance of indifference, added: 'Bring in your friends, whoever they are.'

Richard King tried to look the master of Yewle as they came in, but he did it very poorly. The two officers entered first, but remained standing at the door; then followed Mr Warwick, Mr Rintoul, and Francis Gray. When King saw the two lawyers come forward, neither of them offering him a hand or a glance of recognition, he felt indeed that something ill was in the air. He was for the moment staggered. Turn where he would, the vicar's burning eyes followed him, like fire. He turned to the study table, and seizing a decanter, poured out a quantity of brandy, and gulped it down with an effort, as if it choked him. Then, so fortified, he turned once more to his visitors.

'As master of this house, gentlemen,' he said, 'I thank you for the courtesy of this visit. In the same capacity, gentlemen, I shall thank you to withdraw when you have stated your business as briefly as you can.'

'Mr Richard King,' said Warwick, 'depositions have been sworn before the Mayor of Souchester, proving beyond reasonable doubt that the forgery for which my client, the Rev. Charles King, has endured four years of deep suffering and undeserved obloquy, was committed by yourself, and that you were the person who, dressed as a clergyman, paid the forged cheque into the bank.'

The vicar's eyes were still upon him; and in spite of all he could do, his brow darkened, and he bit his lip.

'Very well,' he answered; 'you need not go into the depositions here, whatever they are. A court of law will be the proper place, and I am ready when you are. Anything more?'

Mr Warwick turned, and was about to address himself to the officers, when the door of the study once more opened, and a gentleman with a military bearing entered. It was Major Saverley, although the only man present who knew so much was Richard King. The Major's face was clouded, and an angry glare sat in his eyes. He hesitated for a moment when he saw the company that stood on the floor facing each other.

'I beg pardon, gentlemen,' he said; 'I am afraid I have interrupted your business. I only wish a few words with Mr Richard King, who will perhaps favour me with a short private interview.'

King moved as if to retire to another room with the Major; but the two officers drew themselves up between him and the door. He did not take any further notice of the matter, except that his face reddened suddenly, and he requested the Major to follow him to the other end of the room, where they stood together in an embrasure of the window. Here they conversed awhile in low tones, those of Richard King gradually becoming louder and more angry.



'What villain has done this?' he said, turning towards the lawyers. 'I gave my friend Major Saverley a cheque for three hundred pounds in payment of a business transaction between us, and when he presented it at my banker's yesterday afternoon, he was refused payment.'

Mr Warwick spoke. 'I can see, sir, that your letters of this morning still lie unopened on the table. If you had consulted your correspondence, you would not have required to ask the question.'

King rushed to the table, and looking hastily over the letters, selected one and tore it open. A few seconds were sufficient to give him the gist of its contents.

'A writ of attachment issued upon my bank account! Who was scoundrel enough to do this?'

'It is not necessary to use strong language,' said Mr Warwick in level business tones. 'I issued it. You were in possession of a large sum of money which belonged to a client of mine, and I had certain information that that money was being rapidly withdrawn from the bank. I felt it my duty to protect her interests, and so put a stop to your operations upon the account.'

The Major looked both angry and crestfallen. 'By Jove, King, you have done me this time. What do you propose now?—This, gentlemen,' he said, turning to the others, 'is not a business matter, as King said, but a debt of honour, and I call upon him to pay me at once.'

Richard King went close up to the Major and said in low tones: 'I am in trouble just now. Stand my friend for the present, and before night everything will be right.'

While all this was passing, the vicar had stood looking slowly round the room, as if recalling to himself the old associations which the sight of these familiar articles of furniture and adornment were calculated to produce. His eye lighted upon the safe. He approached it, and began, in a half-absent manner and as if merely mechanically, to turn the index on the door. Nobody noticed him, and he was unconscious himself of the light coming back upon his memory from that distant day on which the combination lock had been fixed in its place, and when his dead brother had given him the secret of it. 'No one shall ever be able to open it but you and me, Charlie,' he had said. And now, without knowing it, his fingers, directed by that memory, adjusted the index, till at last, turning the handle, with a sharp clang the powerful bolts flew back, and the massive door swung wide open.

Every eye was turned to the safe in a moment. On a shelf stood an object covered with faded velvet—its original colour no one could tell—and beside this, the precious casket, were several bundles of yellow papers. On the edge of the shelf, however, as if it had been hastily placed there, was a fresh white document, folded and loosely tied with a green string.

While they were all gazing with a kind of awe into the ancient receptacle, Mr Rintoul stepped forward and took out the white paper. A glance at the endorsement upon it was enough. It was the second will made by Rowan King.

Richard King observed the solicitor take the

paper with curiosity, and, striding forward, closed the door of the safe, without locking it.

'Is there anything more?' he demanded rather impatiently.

'A good deal more, Mr Richard King,' answered Mr Rintoul. 'I have only recently discovered that there was a later will than that under which you have occupied this estate—and here it is!'

'I believe you are all mad,' cried Richard King, in a voice of passion. 'The will which left Yewle to me was made on the last day of Rowan King's life.'

'So was this, Mr Richard King. The same parties who witnessed the first will witnessed the second. They told me the first was written on blue paper, the second on white. I got the blue one. This, as you all see, is the white will, and it is the last one.'

'It's a forgery!' exclaimed King angrily.

'A forged will would hardly be found where we found this. And it is not a favourable one for you, Mr King. By this deed the testator revokes the will which he had that day "posted to my solicitor, Mr James Rintoul of Bedford Row, London," and bequeaths the whole of his property, real and personal, "to my niece Agnes King, daughter of my brother Charles King, of the vicarage of Yewle."—"But whereas," it goes on to say, "I promised my dear friend and cousin, Mary Gray, on her deathbed, to be a friend to her son Francis Gray, who now resides with me as my private secretary, I desire my said niece Agnes King to take the said Francis Gray into her generous consideration, and to make such disposition for his welfare and happiness as she may think proper."'

Francis Gray did not hear these words read, for, at a whispered hint on the part of Mr Warwick, he had shortly before gone hurriedly out of the room as if to fetch some one.

'The will,' continued Mr Rintoul, 'is witnessed by John Stokes and John Wilson, both of Yewle. It is a very clear and satisfactory will—once more illustrating the old saying, that second thoughts are best; and Mr Warwick will at once proceed to take possession of the house and estate in behalf of his client, Miss King.'

'Never!' cried Richard King, white with rage. 'Never! And before ever that is attempted, I, standing here, in presence of you all, charge that man there, Mr Charles King, with the murder of his brother. I saw him come here that night after dark, partially disguised in the dress of a groom. I saw him speaking to old Stokes the butler, and bribing him to silence by the gift of a bank-note. I saw him enter this room by the window, and next morning I saw his brother sitting in that chair, dead—with a knife at his heart. That man is his brother's murderer!'

The vicar turned pale to the lips, and staggered as if to fall. Francis Gray, who had returned with Stokes and some others while Richard King was speaking, sprang forward and assisted the vicar into a chair. He seemed about to faint; and Stokes, with the instincts of his calling, poured out a little brandy and put it to the sinking man's lips. For a few minutes the whole company was paralysed into silence.

Richard King's eyes glowed with the triumph he had achieved over the prostrate man, and he

turned boldly to Stokes. 'Stokes,' he said, 'you have still that bank-note, and I have its number here in my pocket-book. Produce it.'

Stokes, as it were involuntarily, turned and looked at Francis Gray.

'Ah, it's there, is it?' exclaimed Richard King. 'He has it, has he?—Then, let us have it. It was one of a number of notes in which I had paid to Mrs King, on the afternoon before the murder, the quarterly allowance which she had from Mr Rowan King, and that note has never been returned to the bank. I demand its production.'

Francis Gray put his hand to his pocket as if to produce the note, but Stokes stepped forward.

'No, Mr Francis,' he said with great deliberation; 'it's my turn to speak now, and I am agoing to do it. I got a ten pun' note that night from Mr Charles; but that charge of murder will not stand law, for I heerd the crowner's 'quest say in this very room that there can be no charge of murder laid against no man if the dead body was not found. And Mr Richard King here, though he sought as hard as any man can seek, never got no dead body of Rowan King. He wanted my master opened—that's what he wanted, but he did not manage it. If they'd agreed to open me, why, they might 'a done it; but no King of Yewle was ever yet opened, and I felt it my duty not to let my master, Mr Rowan, be opened by no doctor in England. How did they know he was dead? They'd 'a opened Mr Geoffrey, or any of the rest, the same way, and how would it 'a been then? I said, if they want to open somebody, let them open me, but my master they shall *not*!'

The old butler spoke with wonderful earnestness and fluency, and only at this point paused, as if forced to take breath.

'We know it quite well, Stokes,' said Mr Warwick kindly. 'No one knows your fidelity and affection to your dead master better than I. But this is an awful charge that has been brought against his brother; and though none of Mr Charles's friends could believe it possible, I only wish that Mr Rowan were resting among his ancestors, instead of being—we know not where.'

'Ah, that's it, Mr Warwick,' said the old man, with an eager look in his eyes, and speaking now almost in a whisper. 'It's that charge as has determined me to speak. Mr Rowan is where he ought to be, Mr Warwick—in his own coffin!'

A movement of sensation surged through the group of anxious listeners, and for a few minutes no one spoke. The vicar raised himself by his hands in the chair, and was heard to murmur, as if in prayer: 'Thank God!—thank God!'

'And was it true, Stokes,' asked Mr Warwick solemnly, 'that your master had been murdered?'

'It was not true, but a black lie—nor was there no knife in the body.'

At this moment the old family physician, Dr Hayle, who had come in with Stokes, stepped forward.

'What Stokes says is true,' began the doctor. 'Mr Richard King, two days ago, horrified Mrs King and her daughter at the vicarage by making the same gross charge against the vicar that you

have now heard him make, and, as he had mentioned my name to them, they came to ask my advice. I had always had a suspicion that Stokes, out of devotion to his master, and from his knowledge of the peculiar cataleptic affection which had run through some generations of the Kings, had something to do with the removal and disposal of the dead body. Richard King had said to Mrs King that I believed Mr Rowan had been murdered. I must admit that I had a suspicion, from a dark stain which I saw on the waistcoat of the dead man, that there might have been foul play. In these circumstances, and in view of the poignant distress and alarm of Mrs and Miss King, I came to the conclusion that I must find Stokes and force him to tell me what he knew. He did so, after some pressure, and I at once procured a warrant from the Mayor to have the body disinterred. I and other two doctors made a careful examination of the body, and have sent in a sealed report to the Mayor. I may only here say, that there was no knife and no wound in the body, and that we were unanimous in the conclusion, from all the symptoms, that Mr Rowan King died a natural death. The stain which I saw on the waistcoat, and which had led to my suspicion of foul play, was easily explained. It was the result of the discharge of some coloured liquid on to Mr Rowan's clothes in the course of one of his many chemical experiments. The nature of the liquid—an ordinary chemical solution—is explained in our report to the Mayor. I can only think, from the diligence with which Mr Richard King had sought to discover the body, that he had hoped Mr Rowan *had* been murdered; and he must have made that awful charge to the poor distracted wife and daughter to serve some vile purpose of his own. It was a lie!'

A feeling of relief pervaded all who listened to the doctor's statement, except perhaps Richard King. He stood quite still, but with a slight pallor on his face.

Turning to Stokes, Mr Warwick asked: 'Who assisted you in this business, Stokes?'

'Wilson and Varley and me did it, sir. We laid him in the coffin as had been prepared for him, and we said the burial service to the best of our abilities; for the last King of Yewle wasn't to be buried like a heathen, no more than opened. And we visited the vault every night and every morning, for eight days, but there was no signs of life, so we screwed him down, and com'd away. And all that time Mr Richard King was a tearin' and a searchin' all over the country, but never thought of going to the place as all the Kings was buried in.'

A slight twinkle came into Stokes's eyes as he said this, and something almost like a smile broke out on the faces of the company. Richard King, alone, only scowled the more, and became a little paler.

'Officers,' said Mr Warwick, turning to the constables, 'you had better do your duty.'

They approached Richard King, and one of them reading from his warrant, said that he apprehended him for the alleged crime of uttering a forged cheque on the bank of Prester & Co., London, on the 5th of May 18—.

'It is not true,' cried Richard King. 'I was not in London that day, and you cannot prove it.'

I was fifty miles away from London. I was at the Staplehoe Races that day.

'No, King, you were not,' were the words that came in a firm and decisive tone. It was Major Saverley who spoke. 'I do not quite know what all this is about,' he continued, half apologetically to the company, who had in turn fixed their eyes on him; 'but I have good cause to remember the 5th of May of that year. And as it seems that King here has been up to no good, there can be no harm to any innocent person if I tell what I know to be true. On the day mentioned I intended myself to have gone to the Staplehoe Races, but received a telegram that morning calling me to London to the deathbed of my daughter. She died that night; so I have sad reason to remember the day. I was passing Prester's Bank in a hansom a little after two o'clock, when I saw King coming out of the bank wrapping a muffler round his neck. He was a little oddly dressed, in a clerical-looking coat and an ordinary tall hat, and I was not quite sure of him at first. But at that moment I was particularly desirous that he should square up a little betting transaction with me, and so I stopped the cab and called to him. He seemed annoyed at being recognised, and made as if to pass on without taking any notice of me. But I persisted, and at last he came to me, and I asked him to jump up and I would carry him as far as the club. He did so, and I got the little cheque I was in need of. I do not know the outs and ins of this matter; but I know that Richard King was in London that day, and in Prester's Bank at the hour I mentioned.'

Richard King was very pale, but did not answer. He only turned to the officers and said: 'I am ready to go with you. But come with me to my dressing-room till I put on other clothing.'

The three quitted the study; and those left behind were moving about in that restless, aimless kind of way, in which each has much to say but nobody wishes to speak, when a sharp report rang through the house. Richard King, when he opened his wardrobe door, had taken out a revolver, and shot himself.

That was the end of him. And at the inquest held next day over his body, all the facts which we have narrated were established in evidence, and the Rev. Charles King was once more pronounced to be an honourable man, clear from all the grievous and painful charges which had been made against him, and for which he had suffered so much.

That same afternoon the vicar was once more sitting in his accustomed chair in the vicarage study, with wife and daughter on either side of him. The fire had gone from his eyes now—quenched with the sweetest tears that ever flowed from manhood's eyes. The iron was drawn from his heart. The agony was over, and the peace of heaven was in their hearts.

'Dearest,' said Mrs King at last, 'our friends are here. We must dress for dinner.'

'One moment,' he said. 'The truest friend among them claims our first thanks. Bring Francis Gray here.'

It was to his daughter this command was addressed, and reddening to the eyes Agnes went out. The two presently returned and stood before him.

'Frank,' said the vicar, 'my brother Rowan has left you nothing; but he has commended you to the care of Agnes.—Now, Agnes, what do you propose to do with him?'

She fell on her father's breast and sobbed. Quietly disengaging himself, the vicar said, with his old sweet smile:

'Nay, then, settle the matter between yourselves.—Florence, my dear, come with me, and leave them alone to their discussion.'

It was a beautiful morning in autumn. The Sabbath bells were ringing out on the still air. Along the leafy lanes, that glowed with the hues of burnished green and gold, came the straggling lines of church-goers; for on that day the Vicar of Yewle was to be reinstated by his Bishop in the solemn functions of his holy office. Francis Gray and Agnes were in the vicarage pew, sitting together—she wearing a sprig of orange blossom. And the people crowded in from far and near, in tens and hundreds, for the vicar was to preach again for the first time. He did so simply, briefly, and with feeling; and not a few eyes filled with tears as he gave out the words of his text: 'All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me.'

THE END.

## THE MONTH:

### SCIENCE AND ARTS

THERE is every reason to hope that early in the new year communication by telephone will be established between London and Paris. The necessary works for accomplishing this very desirable result have recently been pushed forward with great energy. The line of communication is one which has been specially laid for the purpose, the new submarine cable finding its landing-place on this side of the Channel at St Margaret's Bay, near Dover, where so many of the old cables are joined to the telegraphic system of the kingdom. The overland wire reaches London *via* Dover, Folkestone, Ashford, and Maidstone.

An administrative Report of the Shan States gives a very interesting account of the methods by which iron is mined and smelted by the natives. The smelter himself wins the ore from the mine, and when he has obtained a couple of basketsful, he conveys it to his furnace, which is made of earth, and has two openings. In the meantime his sole assistant has prepared a quantity of charcoal from pine-wood. The charcoal is placed in the lower opening of the furnace, and a blast is obtained by means of bamboo bellows. The ore, broken into small pieces, is then cast into the upper opening together with powdered charcoal; and the operation, which results in the production of about ten pounds of metal from fifty pounds of ore, is complete in a few hours. After four days' work, the metal made is taken to the nearest bazaar, and at once finds an immediate sale. This primitive method of reducing metal from its ore forms a curious contrast to the gigantic means employed at our



large ironworks for bringing about the same result.

The *Scientific American* publishes an illustrated description of an improved water-cycle, the invention of Mr Joseph Korner. This water-velocipede has rather a curious appearance, but from its construction should be useful for navigation in shallow and still waters. It consists of two hollow cylinders about ten feet in length, above which is supported a seat for the driver, who actuates by treadles a wheel below him after the manner of an ordinary bicycle, only that the wheel is furnished with paddles. In front is the rudder, placed between the two pontoons, and this rudder can be turned to the right or left by cords which proceed to the handle above; so that really the machine is steered just in the same way as an ordinary road-bicycle is steered by its rider. It is stated that many trials of this water-cycle have been made, and it is found to be remarkably successful in practice; on one occasion a distance of more than a quarter of a mile being covered in four minutes up stream, and in a little more than half that time when travelling with the current.

Professor Langley and Mr Verey have been making some curious investigations at the Alleghany Observatory, Pennsylvania, having for their object the discovery of the cheapest form of illumination, and they have gone to Nature in their inquiry, and have experimented upon that far-famed luminous insect which is known as the firefly of Cuba. We may remind our readers that these West Indian fireflies give out such a wonderful amount of radiance that it is customary for ladies to wear them as jewels in their hair; and they have often been employed for the illumination of apartments. The investigators named have been able, by means of very delicate apparatus, to measure the value of the light given by one of these luminous creatures, and they find that to obtain a similar amount of light by artificial means would involve a temperature of about two thousand degrees Fahrenheit. It is curious that in common with other luminous creatures this wonderful light should be emitted without any sensible heat. With regard to the actual cause of this luminosity, examples of which we find in all the three kingdoms of Nature, no scientist has yet been able to give a satisfactory explanation, although many theories have been formulated. There is reason to believe, however, that the strange luminosity is due to chemical combination, and if only its exact nature were discovered, we should soon be in a position to be independent of electricity, gas, oil, and all other agents which are called to our aid during the dark hours.

Sir Countess Lindsay, the energetic art patron to whom the public owe so many interesting exhibitions at the Grosvenor Gallery, has suggested, or rather revived, a curious scheme, which may be described as a circulating picture society. The idea is, that the subscribers to the scheme should, by an annual payment, be entitled to the use or loan of pictures by celebrated living artists, and that just as in the case of a circulating library, the number of works that they would be permitted to use or hang in their rooms at one time would be according to the amount of their subscription. A list or catalogue of works at the

disposal of the society would be published at stated intervals, and from this list subscribers would be able to choose works which would afterwards be allotted to them. The scheme is no doubt calculated by its promoter to do good to both artists and their patrons; but we fear that it might act disadvantageously towards our painters by checking the sale of their works.

A new butter-making machine was lately exhibited at Kensington, London, in the presence of a number of experts; it is the invention of a Swedish engineer, Mr C. A. Johansson (of Stockholm), and it certainly represents the most rapid means by which milk can be converted into butter. The machine met with some attention at the Jubilee show of the Royal Agricultural Society, where it received the highest award; but it is now seen for the first time in England in actual operation. Like the centrifugal apparatus for separating cream from milk, its principal feature is a drum which rotates at a very high speed. This motion separates the globules from the skimmed milk, and while the latter is poured away, the thicker liquid is delivered ready for making it into butter at the bottom of the revolving drum. The machine described is capable of dealing with fifteen hundred pints of milk an hour, and the time occupied in making butter is exceedingly short—indeed, butter begins to appear three or four minutes after the milk is poured into the upper part of the apparatus.

At the recent Exhibition of the Photographic Society of Great Britain specimens of the newly-discovered method of printing on textile fabrics by means of Primuline—a coal-tar colouring matter—were shown. We have already in these columns alluded to this new method of photographic printing, and have remarked that the method might receive important applications in various trades. After seeing the excellent specimens of work shown at the Exhibition, we are more than ever convinced that the primuline printing process has a wide future before it. We may remind our readers that this is not a simple black-and-white process like most photographic printing methods, but all kinds of different colours are possible, and the specimens exhibited printed on muslin, cloth, velvet, and silk, consisted mostly of artistic patterns on various coloured grounds. In some cases the effect of contrasted colours was very soft and beautiful.

The many uses to which celluloid—or imitation ivory, as it is often called—has been applied has stimulated invention in a like direction; and now an imitation celluloid, called Lactite, has been patented by Mr W. Callender. Lactite, as the name suggests, owes its origin to milk, the solids in which are reduced to a partly soluble or gelatinous state by means of borax, and are then mixed with some mineral salt in association with an acid and water. The process by which this lactite is produced is as follows: the casein, or solids, from the milk is incorporated with the borax, after which the mineral salt held in solution in acid is added. Acetate of lead and acetic acid are mentioned as being favourable agents to employ. After the mixture has been effectuated, the solids separate from the acid water which is drawn off, when the residue

is subjected to great pressure to expel any remaining moisture, and afterwards to evaporation by heat. The material can be moulded into any form desired, and can be coloured any tint by the addition of suitable pigments. If desired, the manufacture can be rendered considerably cheaper by the addition of lime or chalk.

A Report has been issued with regard to the condition of the river Thames, the result of an inspection by the chief engineer and chemist of the London County Council. These gentlemen report that although the water in some cases is much discoloured, it is free from any smell except slight effluvia in the neighbourhood of Woolwich. They further report that the banks and the foreshore of the river are comparatively clean, and free from muddy deposit. On the whole, they consider that the state of the Thames is much improved by the sewage-works carried out during the current year. But this was to be expected, considering that more than three hundred and sixty-six thousand tons of sludge have been shipped and discharged out at sea since the 1st of January.

The Thames, unfortunately, is not the only river in the neighbourhood of the metropolis which is subject to pollution. The same question has lately been raised with regard to the long-continued pollution of the river Wey and other minor streams which flow through the beautiful county of Surrey. Two of the chief towns on the river, Guildford and Godalming, have no sewage system, although in both towns works are in progress. But in addition to the sewage, the river suffers from the discharge of various manufactures, particularly from a certain tannery which leaves scum and oily substances on the surface of the water; the stream in some cases has become so offensive that horses will refuse to drink its waters, and large quantities of fish, including many fine trout, have been poisoned. A government inquiry has lately been held to consider this important subject, and it is to be hoped that some means will be adopted to stop the evil.

About two dozen edible fungi, a list of which has lately been published, were exhibited for sale in the market of Modena during the year 1889. It is stated that most of these fungi are also natives of Britain, but owing to the general ignorance upon the subject, they are seldom utilised. We all have a natural disinclination to make experiments upon fungi that we are not acquainted with, because it is known well enough that certain plants of the mushroom kind are poisonous. The Berlin police have lately had reason to issue a caution to the public against packets of so-called 'dried mushrooms,' which it appears are largely sold in that city, and which often contain poisonous fungi. In this caution it is stated that edible mushrooms when dried preserve their white colour; but that the hurtful varieties become blue in tint on being dried.

Some important experiments have lately been conducted at Sheffield at the works of Messrs John Brown & Co. with a new form of boiler tube which has been invented and patented by Mr. Serve. This 'Serve' tube, instead of being plain, like those in ordinary use, is ribbed, so that the heat-absorbing surface is really increased to double what it would be in a tube of plain section. It is obvious, too, that this result is brought about

without increasing to any great extent the area of the tube. Two boilers for the experiments were erected at the works referred to, one being fitted with tubes of the old type, and one furnished with 'Serve' tubes. As the result of these experiments, it was shown that the quantity of steam was much greater with the new tubes, while this increase was accompanied by economy of fuel. A number of experts have visited the works to watch these experiments, including representatives of the Admiralty, Lloyds, and others interested in the question.

It is stated that soap in India is regarded almost in the light of a natural curiosity, for it is rarely if ever to be obtained of a shopkeeper there. Of course it is sold in the larger towns; but the amount used by the natives must be very small, seeing that the total consumption of soap in India last year was only five thousand tons. This means that the amount used by each person for the year was considerably less than one ounce.

According to a New York scientific authority, milk will keep better if aerated than when submitted to a lower temperature than the atmosphere by means of ice. The method by which the liquid is aerated is most simple, and consists in allowing it to run from one vessel to another in fine streams, as it might do through an ordinary colander. This operation must be done out of doors and where the air is perfectly pure; a good arrangement being to place a number of perforated vessels one above the other, and to allow the milk to trickle from the topmost to the bottom one in fine streams. In connection with this matter, we may state that so-called sterilised milk is, according to a German investigator, sometimes very much fuller of germs than ordinary milk fresh from the cow. This inquirer has, upon examining a number of samples of milk from different sources, found them charged with germs to a very large extent. He has also found that these germs increase at a wonderful rate. Many householders now adopt the sensible plan of boiling all milk before it is used.

Two improvements have lately been introduced in diving apparatus. The first to which we refer is the invention of Mr. A. E. Stove, and represents a new and simple method of joining the helmet to the breastplate by a particular form of collar, which is provided with a metallic ring-screw threaded in sections. The helmet, which is screw-threaded in the same way, can be dropped into its place on the breastplate collar, and, with a slight turn, can be firmly locked with ease, expedition, and safety, and without the screws, nuts, and loose pieces which were formerly necessary. This new modification of the diver's dress is in use at the works of the Manchester Ship Canal. The other improvement has been introduced by a French engineer, who fixes a powerful glow lamp to the top of the helmet as a substitute for the light carried when necessary by the diver. By this new arrangement the man's hands are both at liberty for the work that has to be done. The lamp is connected by insulated wires with a dynamo above water.

According to the report of a lecture by Dr W. B. Richardson on 'Work in Relation to Health,' which was delivered in Birmingham recently, this eminent physiologist stated that mental work

is the least hurtful and wearing; physical work alone comes next; and the mixed work—physical and mental—is the most severe of all. He holds that eight hours' sleep is necessary to any person engaged in work of any kind, and is an advocate for eight hours' work, eight hours' relaxation, and eight hours' rest. Work is lightened, he tells us, by cleanliness, the wearing of proper clothing, and careful attention to food and drink. Although mental and physical work combined may be, as the lecturer states, injurious, it is very certain that many hard brain-workers find the greatest relief from alternating that work with heavy physical labour. We have a well-known example of this in the good health enjoyed by our octogenarian statesman.

It is stated that an effective remedy to prevent snow-blindness, which is such a trouble to the inhabitants of cold climates, is to be found in blackening the nose and cheeks below the eyes. Persons who are careful of their appearance might be inclined to consider the remedy rather worse than the disease; but in sparsely populated districts there could be no objection to its adoption.

A technical paper gives some useful particulars regarding the manner in which the quality of paper may be tested. In order to find out its resistance to wear, it should first be crumpled and kneaded between the hands, after which treatment a weak paper will become full of holes, while a strong paper will assume a leathery texture. Under such a test, the presence of much dust will show that earthy impurities have been mixed with the pulp; while, if the material should break up, it indicates that it has been overbleached. If the paper when burnt should leave more than three per cent. of ash, this is a further indication that it is charged with clay, gypsum, or other mineral ingredients. The kind and quality of the material is further tested by use of the microscope, and it can be chemically tested with a solution of iodine, when a yellow coloration will indicate the presence of wood-fibre, and a brown tint that of linen, cotton, or flax.

A dispute has long existed among medical authorities with regard to the dangers of chloroform. Some, including the late Sir James Simpson and Professor Syme, soon inferred from experience that it was safer to push boldly on till the patient was in deep anaesthesia than to keep him long in the stage of struggling and excitement. But other authorities, especially of the London school, never accepted this. Dr Kirk of Glasgow, who has made a special study of the subject for fifteen years, in a 'New Theory of Chloroform Syncope,' has offered a novel explanation of the problem. According to his views, the chloroform in the blood has nothing to do with the early syncope, which may come on even before the patient is anaesthetised. It is the vapour in the lungs which he believes to be the cause of the occurrence; and it is not to its action there, but to the violent reaction which ensues when it is allowed to escape at an early stage, that he maintains the catastrophe is due. In deep anaesthesia this reaction, he holds, is prevented by the chloroform in the blood. In view of the conclusion arrived at by the Hyderabad Commission, that the danger is from an overdose or from asphyxia, this new theory seems of the utmost importance.

If chloroform may kill like an electric shock, or like lightning, there can be no safety until every administrator knows this; and if Dr Kirk's new theory be true, it is important also to notice how dangerous it is for any one to administer chloroform to himself.

### EMPTY BENCHES.

A POET may pretend to be satisfied with winning the suffrages of a select following; but an actor feels on no pleasant terms with himself or his audience if that audience be of the few-and-far-between order. Disgusted at being able to count the heads in front of him, a representative of Richard III., on reaching the tent scene, exclaimed: 'I'll forth, and walk awhile;' and suiting the action to the word, crossed the stage, made his exit, and went home to supper, leaving his comrades to finish the tragedy in the best way they could. Playing one night at Dorchester to a dozen or so of people, Edmund Kean grew reckless, gagged frightfully, and played his very worst; to learn, ere he left the theatre, that among the audience sat no less a personage than the Drury Lane manager, who had come expressly to see him act. 'I've ruined myself for ever!' said he to his wife, when he got home to his lodgings. Fortunately for his future, on the night which was to make or mar him at Drury Lane, Kean was too determined to succeed to be disturbed by disheartening surroundings, and roused the sparse house to such enthusiasm that Hazlitt wondered how so much noise could be made by so few people. Later on, he was apt to treat a scanty audience a little scurvily, but was on his best behaviour when he visited Paris in 1828, for in a magazine of the time we read: 'Shylock has been repeated by Kean, and received with the same testimonies of enthusiasm, and the same beggarly account of empty benches. On the night he condescended to be the representative of Brutus, in Howard Payne's tragedy, the audience was so scanty in number that many were apprehensive of the effect the slight might have on his temper. Kean, however, never acted better in his life, and a performance of surpassing power delighted the very few persons present.'

When the Louth manager came with a long face to Macready as he was dressing for *Virginus*, and in answer to the tragedian's inquiry if it was a bad house, replied, 'Bad house, sir?—there's no one!' Macready asked: 'What! nobody at all?'—'Not a soul, sir, except the Warden's party in the boxes, and one or two in the gallery and pit,' responded the manager. 'Are there five?' queried Macready. 'Yes, sir, there are five.' 'Then,' said the actor, 'go on at once; we have no right to give ourselves airs.' And in his own opinion he never played *Virginus* better than he did to an audience he could count on his fingers. At a performance in 1807, for the benefit of the Theatrical Fund, given at the Theatre Royal, Norwich, the curtain rose in front of ten people in the boxes, seven in the gallery, and five in the pit, the entire takings reaching the sum of twenty-two shillings.

On that terribly bitter Tuesday night in January 1881, when few who could help it cared



to traverse the London streets, the combined audiences of all the theatres would not have made a decent gathering for the smallest of them. Mrs Bancroft felt she would have liked to ask the weather-beaten few who had battled their way to the Haymarket to forego what they came to see and take tea with her on the stage. Giving more practical proof of his sympathy, Mr Toole straightway invited his 'gods' and pittites to take their ease in the stalls, and regaled them with hot spiced ale, whereupon they sang, 'He's a jolly good fellow!' and a merry evening was enjoyed on both sides of the footlights.

It is not easy to eclipse the gaiety of the Parisians; but in 1832 they voted the play was not the thing when cholera was ravaging the city, although publicly advertised, 'It has been noticed with much astonishment that the theatres are the only places—no matter how crowded—where not a single case of cholera has appeared.' One night the company of the Odéon found themselves confronted by one man. This was too much, or rather too little for their patience, and they insisted upon his taking back his money. He stood upon his rights, and insisted upon the play being played. The law was on his side, and the actors were obliged to act; but they did their very worst until the audience hissed his hardest; then the manager handed him over to the police for disturbing the performance, and closed his doors. The manager of Wallack's Theatre disposed of the solitary patron who honoured his house with his presence on the night after a cyclone in a different way. Turning to one of the company, he said: 'Take him to the hotel at the corner; treat him, and give him back his dollar.' Putting a liberal interpretation on his instructions, the actor took the audience round the corner, and after discussing several bottles of champagne, gave the enterprising gentleman his dollar and bade him good-night.

Charles Mathews was wont to take things as they came. 'I have played to an audience of one,' said he to a friend. 'It was in the Sandwich Islands. I had advertised the play to commence at two o'clock! I had the scene set, and as I make it a rule never to disappoint the public, I determined to go on with the show. I came on and bowed to a man of colour, who, in a white hat, was seated in the stalls. He returned my salute with becoming solemnity. I went through the entire first act of *A Game of Speculation*, and that man of colour never once smiled—he never changed his position. At one time I was nearly sending the prompter to feel him to see if he were alive. I lowered the curtain on the second act, and he was, like the House of Commons, "still sitting." I felt bound in honour to reward persistency of this kind, and I gave him the third act, gag and all. A quarter of an hour after, my coloured friend was still in the same attitude, so I went round and told him the show was over. He shook hands with me and smiled, and asked me what it was all about!'

A sailor who had just come into port with a full pocket paid Stephen Kemble thirty pounds to have a performance of *Henry IV.* all to himself, with Kemble as 'the old boy with the round fore-castle, built like a Dutch lugger, and lurching like a Spanish galleon in a heavy sea.' He chose the music to be played by way of

overture, saw the play through, and gave vigorous expression to his appreciation of the Falstaff of the occasion. Mr J. C. Foster, an American manager, taking his ease at his inn in Bucyrus, Ohio, was aroused by a stranger entering the room, playbill in hand, and accosting him with: 'You play *Richard III.* to-night. Now, I have never had an opportunity of seeing it, and, unfortunately, I must leave town this evening. How much money would induce you to play *Richard III.* for me this afternoon?' Thinking his visitor was joking, Foster said he would do it for twenty-five dollars. 'And how much for *The Rough Diamond* as well?' 'Ten dollars,' quoth the amused manager. He did not know whether he was amused or vexed when the stranger planked down thirty-five dollars, with the remark that the performance must commence at two o'clock sharp, and took his leave. Upon telling his company the bargain he had concluded, the notion of playing Shakespeare's tragedy to one man so tickled their fancy that they at once consented. Two o'clock came, and with it the audience. Choosing the best position in the hall, and placing his feet upon the back of the seat before him, he settled down to enjoy the tragedy, applauding heartily, and at the conclusion calling the Richard before the curtain. Then the farce was gone through with equal success, and the delighted audience left in time to catch the 6.45 train.

Disgusted with the reception awarded to one of his operas, Jean Baptiste de Lully ordered it to be played before himself only, when the opera went swimmingly, the music and its exponents being rapturously applauded by the impartial auditor, who rewarded the singers with a sumptuous supper. King Louis of Bavaria had a passion for grand opera, and rarely allowed a week to go by without indulging it; but he would not permit any one else to share the pleasure with him. When Madame Charlotte Walter appeared before him in *Narcisse* the performance commenced at midnight, the curtain rising immediately the king was seated in his box, seeing all, but seen by none, there being no lights but those on the stage. The curtain fell between three and four in the morning, the actors remaining silent on the stage, so that the reverie in which Louis always indulged after a performance might not be disturbed. At last a bell announced his departure, when they were free to do likewise.

The theatrical caterer has often to contend with outside influences over which he has no control, resulting in scanty audiences, or it may be no audience at all. A manager of the old Bower Saloon meeting a friend one day near the Horse Guards, the latter inquired how he was getting on. 'Oh, we live, sir, we live,' was the reply. 'Well, I must be off,' said his friend; 'I'm in a hurry to see about seats at the Italian Opera next week.' 'What!' exclaimed the Bower manager, 'does the Italian Opera open next week? I'm very sorry to hear it!' 'Why, what can it matter to you?' cried the other. 'Surely you don't imagine that the Opera performances will clash with yours?' 'Won't it, though,' was the answer. 'My audience won't be inside Her Majesty's; but they will all be there—picking pockets!' and shaking hands, the dismayed manager went sadly on his way.

## OUR WEDDING DAY.

Our wedding day, dear heart,  
Well I remember  
How crisp the hoar-frost lay  
That chill December.  
I was a foolish thing.  
How my heart failed me;  
Little you knew or guessed  
What 't was that ailed me.

I had my doubts of you.  
Only just fancy!  
Would you have thought it, Jack,  
Of your fond Nancy?  
People kept telling me  
Men were deceivers;  
Women most foolish folk,  
Heedless believers.

Would you be kind? I asked,  
And my heart fluttered;  
True to the marriage vows  
Your lips had uttered!  
Ten years ago, dear love—  
How the time passes.  
Jack! drink my health again;  
Fill up our glasses.

Don't wipe my tears away;  
They're not for sadness.  
My heart is full to-day  
Only of gladness.  
How true you've been to me  
None can guess ever;  
Husband, stand by me still,  
Never to sever.

As o'er the frosty sky  
Wintry clouds hasten,  
Our joys in future, Jack,  
Trials may chasten.  
Still hand in hand we'll step,  
Fearing no morrow;  
Wind blows the clouds away,  
Love chases sorrow.

Our wedding day is o'er—  
Twelve the clock's striking.  
Look at me, Jack—am I  
Still to your liking?  
Don't say a word, you goose;  
Only remember  
I love you better now  
Than that December.

L. E. TIDDEMAN.

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